

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

ME Leger, LLC

Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Louisiana

ME Leger's My Pair Tree Sales Go National

Client Profile:

ME Leger, LLC is a startup company formed in 2007 as a mother and son enterprise. Mary Ellen Hathorn, President, invented a new shoe accessory called My Pair Tree, which is a hanger that holds multiple pairs of flip flops, Crocs, and different types of sandals. The product utilizes a plastic hanger uniquely designed to hold flip flops by the straps that fits between the toes. These plastic hangers are attached to decorative ribbon fastened with a metal ring to hang from. Located in Lafayette, Louisiana, the company employs 7 people and markets to a national audience.

Situation:

ME Leger came to the Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Louisiana (MEPOL), a NIST MEP network affiliate, needing assistance in protecting their intellectual property and help with finding a plastic injection molding facility to assist in the design and development of the plastic insert in their hanger design.

Solution:

MEPOL assisted ME Leger through partial funding from the Small and Emerging Business Development grant administered by Louisiana Economic Development. With funding in place, a referral by MEPOL to Noble Plastics, an injection mold designer in Carencro, Louisiana for the manufacturer of the plastic insert, was made, and a patent project with a third-party patent attorney for MEPOL was signed. Noble Plastics began manufacturing the plastic insert by injection molding. ME Leger scored their first contract with Dillard's department store and The Container Store. The Container Store chose to feature My Pair Tree on the cover of their Spring 2009 catalog, which prints two million copies, and was featured once again in their Spring Catalog for 2010. My Pair Tree was also selected as the promotional product placed on the front of the rows in 48 of their retail locations. In Spring 2009, My Pair Tree was featured on the Today Show and Good Morning America.

Results:

- * Increased sales by 3,200 percent.
- * Realized a cost savings of \$6,000.
- * Invested \$3,590 in development systems and workforce development.
- * Created 6 jobs.

Testimonial:

"My relationship with MEPOL has been invaluable. With their assistance, I was able to meet with a patent attorney and under his legal advice, filed for my non-provisional patent. Now that I have established intellectual property rights on my hanger, I was able to increase my sales nationwide and grow my business."

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Mary Ellen Hathorn, President